

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A movable body rental system, comprising:

a plurality of movable body apparatuses; and

a movable body management apparatus operable to manage said plurality of movable body apparatuses, the movable body management apparatus including:

retrieval information reception means for receiving, from a mobile communication terminal, movable body retrieval information that includes a movable body retrieval request and a current position of the mobile communication terminal, and

notification means for notifying the mobile communication terminal of a position of an available one of the plurality of movable body apparatuses nearby the current position of the mobile communication terminal and for providing the mobile communication terminal with identification information associated with the available movable body apparatus;

each one of said plurality of movable body apparatuses including:

identification information receiving means for receiving identification information associated with that movable body apparatus from the mobile communication terminal,

virtual currency acceptance means for accepting virtual currency provided by a user of that movable body apparatus, the virtual currency storing account information that includes balance information in virtual currency units used solely for the movable body rental system, the virtual currency units being convertible into units of circulated currency at a

conversion rate that varies based on demand for renting the movable body apparatuses,

authentication information transmission means for transmitting the account information to said movable body management apparatus,

authentication result information reception means for receiving authentication result information from said movable body management apparatus,

lock means for preventing use of that movable body apparatus,

lock control means for controlling said lock means based on the received authentication result information,

distance measuring means for measuring a distance traveled by that movable body apparatus,

distance information transmission means for transmitting information indicating the measured distance to said movable body management apparatus,

time measuring means for measuring a driving time associated with the measured distance, the driving time being the time taken to travel the measured distance and being measured only while that movable body apparatus is moving, and

time information transmission means for transmitting information indicating the measured driving time to said movable body management apparatus;

said movable body management apparatus including:

authentication information reception means for receiving authentication information from the mobile communication terminal and for receiving the account information of the virtual currency from the movable body apparatus,

determination means for determining whether payment is possible based on the account information of the virtual currency,

authentication result information transmission means for transmitting the authentication result information corresponding to the received authentication information to said movable body apparatus, the authentication result information indicating whether payment is possible based on the determination by the determination means,

distance information reception means for receiving, from said movable body apparatus, the information indicating the measured distance,

time information reception means for receiving, from said movable body apparatus, the information indicating the measured driving time,

fee calculation means for calculating a fee for use of said movable body apparatus, the fee being based on the measured distance and on a time difference between an average driving time required to travel the measured distance and the measured driving time that was measured only while said movable body apparatus was moving, and

settlement means for ~~performing settlement processing~~ generating, based on the calculated fee, balance update information for the virtual currency, and for transmitting the balance update information to said movable body apparatus;

said virtual currency acceptance means of said movable body apparatus updating the balance information of the virtual currency in accordance with the balance update information.

2. (cancelled)

3. (currently amended) The movable body rental system according to claim 12, wherein said movable body management apparatus further comprises:

authentication request reception means for receiving an authentication request which includes user identification information that is transmitted by a mobile communication terminal of a user of said movable body apparatus, and

authentication processing means for performing authentication processing based on the received user identification information,

said authentication result information transmission means of said movable body management apparatus transmitting the permission information based on results determined by said authentication processing means and said determination means.

4. (previously presented) The movable body rental system according to claim 1, wherein said movable body management apparatus further comprises:

authentication request reception means for receiving an authentication request which includes user identification information that is transmitted by a mobile communication terminal of a user of said movable body apparatus, and

authentication processing means for performing authentication processing based on the received user identification information,

said authentication result information transmission means of said movable body management apparatus transmitting the permission information based on results determined by said authentication processing means.

5. (previously presented) The movable body rental system according to claim 1, wherein said fee calculation means

of said movable body management apparatus determines the fee based on a location where said movable body apparatus is returned.

6. (previously presented) The movable body rental system according to claim 5, wherein said fee calculation means of said movable body management apparatus sets a higher fee when said movable body apparatus is returned to a location different than a predetermined return location than when said movable body apparatus is returned to said predetermined return location.

7. - 21. (cancelled)

22. (currently amended) A movable body apparatus of a movable body rental system that includes a plurality of such movable body apparatuses and a movable body management apparatus, said movable body management apparatus managing said plurality of movable body apparatuses, said movable body management apparatus receiving from a mobile communication terminal movable body retrieval information including a movable body retrieval request and a current position of the mobile communication terminal, notifying the mobile communication terminal of a position of the movable body apparatus upon the movable body apparatus being available and nearby the current position of the mobile communication terminal, and providing the mobile communication terminal with identification information associated with the movable body apparatus, said movable body apparatus comprising:

identification information receiving means for receiving the identification information associated with the movable body apparatus from a mobile communication terminal;

virtual currency acceptance means for accepting virtual currency provided by a user of the movable body apparatus, the virtual currency storing balance information in virtual currency units used solely for the movable body

rental system, the virtual currency units being convertible into units of circulated currency at a conversion rate that varies based on demand for renting the movable body apparatuses;

authentication information transmission means for transmitting the account information to said movable body management apparatus;

authentication result information reception means for receiving authentication result information from the movable body management apparatus in response to said transmitting of the authentication information, the authentication result information indicating whether payment is possible based on the account information of the virtual currency;

lock means for preventing use of said movable body apparatus;

lock control means for controlling said lock means based on the received authentication result;

distance measuring means for measuring a distance traveled by said movable body apparatus;

distance information transmission means for transmitting, to said movable body management apparatus, information indicating the measured distance;

time measuring means for measuring a driving time associated with the measured distance, the driving time being the time taken to travel the measured distance and being measured only while said movable body apparatus is moving; and

time information transmission means for transmitting, to said movable body management apparatus, information indicating the measured driving time so that said movable body management apparatus calculates a fee for use of said movable body apparatus, the fee being based on the measured

distance and on a time difference between an average driving time required to travel the measured distance and the measured driving time that was measured only while said movable body apparatus was moving, generates balance update information for the virtual currency based on the calculated fee, and transmits the balance update information to said movable body apparatus;

said virtual currency acceptance means updating the balance information of the virtual currency in accordance with the balance update information.

23. - 25. (cancelled)

26. (currently amended) A movable body management apparatus of a movable body rental system that includes a plurality of movable body apparatuses and said movable body management apparatus, said movable body management apparatus managing the plurality of movable body apparatuses, said movable body management apparatus comprising:

retrieval information reception means for receiving, from a mobile communication terminal, movable body retrieval information that includes a movable body retrieval request and a current position of the mobile communication terminal;

notification means for notifying the mobile communication terminal of a position of a given one of the plurality of movable body apparatuses that is available and nearby the current position of the mobile communication terminal, and for providing the mobile communication terminal with identification information associated with the available movable body apparatus;

authentication information reception means for receiving authentication information from the mobile communication terminal and for receiving account information of virtual currency from the available movable

body apparatus, the virtual currency being provided by a user of the available movable body apparatus, the virtual currency storing the account information that includes balance information in virtual currency units used solely for the movable body rental system, the virtual currency units being convertible into units of circulated currency at a conversion rate that varies based on demand for renting the movable body apparatuses;

determination means for determining whether payment is possible based on the account information of the virtual currency;

authentication result information transmission means for transmitting authentication result information corresponding to the received authentication information to the given movable body apparatus, the authentication result information indicating whether payment is possible based on the determination by the determination means;

distance information reception means for receiving, from the given one of the plurality of movable body apparatuses, information indicating a measured distance traveled by the given one of the plurality of apparatuses;

time information reception means for receiving, from the given one of the plurality of movable body apparatuses, a measured driving time associated with the measured distance, the measured driving time being the time taken to travel the measured distance and being measured only while the given one of the plurality of apparatuses is moving;

fee calculation means for calculating a fee for use of the given one of the plurality of movable body apparatuses, the fee being based on the measured distance and on a time difference between an average driving time required to travel the measured distance and the measured driving time;
and

settlement means for ~~performing settlement processing~~
generating, based on the calculated fee, balance update
information for the virtual currency, and for transmitting
the balance update information to the movable body
apparatus.

27. (cancelled)

28. (currently amended) The movable body management
apparatus according to claim ~~26~~²⁷, further comprising:

authentication request reception means for receiving
an authentication request which includes user
identification information that is transmitted by a mobile
communication terminal of a user of the given one of the
plurality of movable body apparatuses, and

authentication processing means for performing
authentication processing based on the identification
information,

said authentication result information transmission
means transmitting said permission information based on
results determined by said authentication processing means
and said determination means.

29. (previously presented) The movable body management
apparatus according to claim 26, further comprising:

authentication request reception means for receiving
an authentication request which includes user
identification information transmitted by a mobile
communication terminal of a user of said movable body
apparatus; and

authentication processing means for performing
authentication processing based on the identification
information,

said authentication result information transmission
means transmitting permission information based on results
determined by said authentication processing means.

30. (previously presented) The movable body management apparatus according to claim 26, wherein said fee calculation means determines the fee based on a location where said movable body apparatus is returned.

31. (previously presented) The movable body management apparatus according to claim 30, wherein said fee calculation means sets a higher fee when said movable body apparatus is returned to a location different than a predetermined return position than when said movable body apparatus is returned to said predetermined return location.

32. - 126. (cancelled)